Frequently Asked Questions

I'm a personal representative of an estate—can I get advice on transferring property from the Register of Deeds?

No. The Register of Deeds' sole purpose is to record and maintain records of land and property documents. Any legal questions involving the transfer of property should be directed to an attorney.

Can I transfer ownership of property at the Register of Deeds?

No. The Register of Deeds does not have any part in transferring ownership of property. After a deed is drafted, depositing it at the Register of Deeds creates an official record of the deed; however the Register of Deeds' office has no part in drafting or developing deeds.

Why should I file with the Register of Deeds?

Filing your deed with the Register of Deeds creates an official record of that deed, which helps prevent fraud or increased litigation costs if a lawsuit involving the deeded property arise. The Register of Deeds offers several fraud prevention programs. More information can be found at their website.

Contact Information

Phone: (517) 676-7287
Email: rd_hertel@ingham.org
Website: rd.ingham.org

Physical Address: 341 S. Jefferson
Mason, MI 48854

Mailing Address: PO Box 195
Mason, MI 48854-0195

Foreclosure Services

Foreclosure fraud occurs every year in Ingham County and in other counties around the state of Michigan. Foreclosure fraud includes instances where property owners pay restructured agreements, only to be ousted after foreclosure proceedings occur without their knowledge. Other fraudulent actions such as "robo-signing" occur every year and continue to garner attention in the media. Often foreclosure fraud can occur without the homeowner's knowledge and may result in the sale of an individual's home to a third party without any notice of the foreclosure or sale.

The Ingham County Register of Deeds has taken steps to prevent foreclosure fraud by setting up a foreclosure fraud hotline to assist Ingham County residents who are experiencing unfair treatment during foreclosure proceedings. The Register of Deeds will review any complaints and forward their findings to attorneys at Mid-Michigan Legal Services who will assist individuals in fighting unfair or fraudulent foreclosure proceedings. Call (517) 676-7210 for more information on how the Register of Deeds office may help with foreclosure issues, or visit rd.ingham.org.
The Register of Deeds And You!

The Register of Deeds is an elected official serving the residents of Ingham County. The Register of Deeds serves a four-year term and hires additional staff members that aid him/her with his official duties. The Ingham County Register of Deeds is responsible for maintaining a facility where all real property documents can be held. Real property documents include the following:

Deeds: Deeds are written legal instruments that affirm or confirm the transfer, interest, or right in real property. All deeds must contain a description of the land it affects and be signed by the grantor and grantee.

Mortgages: A mortgage document is a writing that provides evidence of a loan. Mortgages identify information such as the amount of the loan, the interest rate, the grantor and grantee, and other similar information.

Affidavits: Affidavits are formal documents that contain sworn statements of fact that are voluntarily given by an individual known as the affiant. Affidavits can cover a wide variety of topics, including land matters.

Depositing legal documents with the Register of Deeds makes the document a public record. The Ingham County Register of Deeds office currently has documents dating back to 1840.

Statutory Fees
For entering any document with the Register of Deeds, the following fees will be charged:

First page..................................................$14.00
Each Additional Page.................................$3.00

Requirements for Records Submitted to the Register of Deeds

All records submitted to the Register of Deeds must comply with the following criteria:

(a) The name of each individual whom the record applies must be clearly written.

(b) The record must be notarized, and the notary's name must appear beneath the signature of the public notary.

(c) The address of each of the grantees must be legibly printed on the form.

(d) The record must conform to specific formatting guidelines. For more information on guidelines, see below.

(e) The record must not contain any discrepancies.

Formatting: Prior to 1997
All records submitted to the Register of Deeds executed before April 1, 1997 must be (1) typed or written in 8 point font or larger, (2) legible, (3) on paper not less than 13 pound weight.

Formatting: 1997 to present
All records submitted to the Register of Deeds executed after April 1, 1997 must (1) have unprinted space that is at least 2-1/2 inches at the top of the first page and at least 1/4 inch on all remaining sides, (2) have a single statement identifying the type of record being submitted, (3) be submitted in no less than 10 point font, (4) be printed in black ink on white paper that is no less than 20 pound weight, (5) not be printed on paper smaller than 8-1/2 by 11 inches or on paper larger than 8-1/2 by 14 inches.

The Register of Deeds and Probate Issues

After an individual is appointed as the personal representative of an estate, the personal representative will need to execute deeds to transfer the real property of the decedent. In order for a personal representative to execute said deeds without issue, the individual should go and submit a copy of the decedent’s death certificate with the Register of Deeds. When the personal representative files the decedent’s death certificate, the individual purchasing or receiving the land avoids potential title problems and inconsistencies with county records.

Avoiding Probate

Individuals looking to avoid probate when dealing with property after death have two options. First, the deed holder can add another name to the deed, giving that person full survivorship rights. This means that in the event of one person’s death, the other has sole ownership of the property; however both individuals own the property jointly when both parties are alive. Lady Bird Deeds are the second way to avoid probate proceedings. Lady Bird Deeds appoint a successor upon death, meaning that when the property owner passes away, the land is automatically transferred to the successor.

The Register of Deeds recommends that even if a property owner employs one of these tools, the deed still be registered. Ultimately, filing all property documents with the Register of Deeds creates an official record that is recognized by the courts and may decrease litigation costs and fraudulent activity.